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The Presidential Members of the U.S. Census Monitoring Board present the research findings of Dr. Theodore S. Jojola, "Profiling the Native American Community in Albuquerque: Assessing the Impacts of Census Undercounts and Adjustments."

The study examines the 1990 census undercount of reservation and urban American Indians in the metro Albuquerque, New Mexico area to determine the impact upon social service providers to American Indians. Should a similar undercount discrepancy occur in the results from the 2000 census, Dr. Jojola found that the American Indian community on the reservation and in urban centers will continue to be underfunded and underserved.

Sincerely,

Gilbert F. Casellas, Co-Chair

Profiling the Native American Community in Albuquerque: Assessing the Impacts of Census Undercounts and Adjustments

Introduction

At the request of the Presidential Members of the U.S. Census Monitoring Board, Dr. Ted Jojola of the University of New Mexico conducted a study on the planning implications of the 1990 census undercount on urban Indians and surrounding reservation populations of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Specifically this study assesses the impact of the population undercount, using the Census Bureau's 1990 adjusted and unadjusted counts on Native American social service providers.

This undercount/adjustment study uses the coverage area of a 1999 report conducted for the Department of Family & Community Services, City of Albuquerque.¹ The reason for the 1999 study was twofold; 1) to determine a baseline statistical data set that could be used for purposes of describing the urban Indian population of Albuquerque; and 2) to conduct preliminary analysis that would begin to give a qualitative context of the urban Indian population as it related to social services provision in Albuquerque.

Because there was little understood about the City of Albuquerque's (City) urban Indian population at that time, it was difficult for program providers, such as the Department of Family and Community Services, to target and anticipate the need and extent of funding social services programs.²

At the time of publication of this report, the block level data was not yet available from the 2000 census. However, if the inaccuracies in the 2000 census are similar to the inaccuracies from the 1990 census then social service planners for the Native American community will continue to endure the negative consequences. For example, local social service providers might not be able to apply for the right amount of grant money or receive the correct amount of entitlement funds throughout the next decade.

¹ *Indian Populations of Albuquerque*, Family & Community Services, City of Albuquerque, 1999. Theodore S. Jojola, principal investigator.

² The Department of Family and Community Services is responsible for the review of community needs and formulation of policy and program recommendations. Research and planning services for the Department are provided through the Planning and Community Development Division, which is responsible for the planning and oversight of services provided by non-profit organizations. It currently manages approximately 100 separate contracts with more than 50 different agencies. These contracts cover a wide spectrum of activities including housing programs, child care, general health and social services, homeless programs, economic development, job training and others.

Findings

The adjustment of population counts for American Indians has a significant impact on the provision of services for both urban and reservation populations.

The 1990 census missed nearly 3,000 American Indians in the Albuquerque metro area—2,550 on the surrounding 11 Indian reservations and 379 urban Indians.

American Indians living in the surrounding reservations were missed at a rate of 13.6 percent while Indians living in the city of Albuquerque were missed at a rate of 4 percent.

All three types of service providers interviewed (the City, community-based organization, and the reservation) believe that the 1990 adjusted numbers gave a better idea of the area Indian population.

Additionally, both the City and community-based service providers believe the 1990 census actually missed more than 4 percent of urban Indians but that the adjusted number improves the count.

Reservation Indian programs, such as those affiliated with the Bureau of Indian Affairs or Indian Health Services, are more apt to be closely tied to U.S. Census numbers because of their U.S. federal requirements for formula funding and tribal program development.

Urban Indian programs, such as a domestic violence center or after-school child care, are more apt to be tied into using census numbers for targeting services among specific population groups (e.g., youth, seniors, low-income, etc.).

The transitory nature of the urban Indian community—drawing on residency between their reservations and their urban neighborhood—is one of the main factors for the chronic undercount of urban Indians.

Because of systematic biases in census data collection, the use of adjusted counts for purposes of program development will greatly benefit both urban and reservation Indians in census 2000.

Context

According to the unadjusted 1990 U.S. Census counts, the population residing within Albuquerque's Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) represented approximately 39 percent (487,120) of New Mexico's population. Urban Indians comprised approximately 2.7 percent (13,156) of Albuquerque's MSA and reservation Indians comprised 3.8 percent (18,747).³

In total, 11 Indian reservations are within an hour's commute (a 50 mile radius) of Albuquerque. The reservation lands of the Pueblos of Isleta, Sandia, and Santa Ana border the city limits on the north and south. Intermediate in location is the Cañoncito Navajo and the Pueblos of Laguna, San Felipe, and Zia. At the periphery are the Acoma, Cochiti, Jemez and Santo Domingo Pueblos. With such a concentration of people, once rural and isolated tribal communities have become part of Albuquerque's urban corridor.

The reservation lands from these 11 Indian tribes form a unique geographic "picture-frame" window that borders Albuquerque on three sides. Together with the U.S. Forest Service lands on the eastern side, Albuquerque is completely surrounded by federal and Indian lands (see Figure 1).

Given the low population density of the surrounding Indian reservations and their minimal interventions on the landscape, the City of Albuquerque benefits from the open-space amenity of their tribal neighbors. In addition, many of the gaming enterprises and economic development enterprises of the surrounding tribes contribute significantly to the economy of the area.

Albuquerque is a principal destination among Indian people for commerce, education, health and employment. And although it can be demonstrated that Indian people perceive their tribal identity to be tied to their historic land base, interacting and/or living in the city is a permanent part of that relationship.

Urban Indians

Overall, there is a general acknowledgement that the urban Indian population is invisible. Whereas Indians living on reservations are identified through their tribal enrollment status, Indians who live in large urban centers often forego their tribal status to blend into the dominant society. By most measures, they are 'statistically' insignificant and often get bypassed by policy makers in favor of larger and more organized racial groups.

³ For purposes of this study, all individuals who self-identified as American Indian/Alaska Native in the U.S. Census and who did not live on the adjoining Indian reservations are considered urban Indian.

In Albuquerque there are few neighborhoods where there is a large concentration of American Indians. Instead, they represent many diverse tribal nations (over 150 by U.S. Census estimates), commute frequently between the city and their home reservations, live primarily in rental units (70 percent), and have a higher incidence of households that are in poverty (29 percent). As a result of these traits, urban Indians in Albuquerque, per se, do not have a single formal organization and tend to distinguish themselves informally through various social and cultural groups.

The need for outside help or assistance occurs largely when informal community-based helping networks are unavailable. The first resort is to seek services directly through their tribe (assuming they are enrolled tribal members). The second resort is to seek services from U.S. federal/Indian providers (e.g., Indian Health Service or the Bureau of Indian Affairs). The final resort is to contact state, city and local non-profit social service providers.

Such a coping mechanism has evolved over successive and sustained interaction within an urban milieu such as Albuquerque. In that sense, the “city is like [a] camp, an encampment we have set up out here that extends our territory.”⁴ Couple this sense of place with Indian identity as it has been played out through the venue of federal/Indian stewardship and one begins to gain an appreciation for the complex dynamics of the urban Indian community. Its transitory nature—drawing on residency between their reservations and their urban neighborhood—is one of the main factors for the chronic undercount.

Discussion of Comparison Data

Overall, as based on the 1990 official (unadjusted) and adjusted U.S. Census counts, there is an increase of 4 percent for urban Indians, but a substantial upward adjustment of 13.6 percent for Indians residing in the surrounding 11 reservations (see Table 1). The adjusted tabulation percentage for reservation areas is higher than the national average of 12.2 percent for Indian lands.

	Official Count	Adjusted Count	Difference	Percent
Urban	13,156	13,535	379	4.0%
Reservation	18,747	21,297	2,550	13.6%

As seen in Table 2, the distribution of adjustments for reservation Indians ranged from a low of 45 persons for Sandia Pueblo (12.6 percent) to 475 persons for Laguna Pueblo (13.1 percent). The gain for each Pueblo does not change their rank order by population. However, the combined gain is substantial (2,550 or 13.6 percent).

⁴ *Oakland's American Indian Community: History, Social Organization and Factors that Contribute to Census Undercount*, Susan Lobo, Center for Survey Methods Research, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., Report #12, May, 1990, pg. 6.

	Official Count	Adjusted Count	Difference	Percent
Sandia	358	403	45	12.6%
Santa Ana	481	544	63	13.1%
Cochiti	666	751	85	12.8%
Zia	637	728	91	14.3%
Canoncito	1,177	1,350	173	14.7%
Jemez	1,738	1,981	243	14.0%
San Felipe	1,859	2,122	263	14.1%
Acoma	2,551	2,893	342	13.4%
Isleta	2,699	3,058	359	13.3%
Santo Domingo	2,947	3,358	411	13.9%
Laguna	3,634	4,109	475	13.1%
Totals	18,747	21,297	2,550	13.6%

Percentage gains ranged from a low of 12.6 percent (Sandia Pueblo) to a high of 14.7 percent (Cañoncito Navajo). Overall, the larger the population of the tribe, the more substantial the percentage adjustment had on the adjusted count.

In Table 3, a comparison of percentages indicates that urban Indians have a larger proportion of ages 18 years and older (65.3 percent) as compared to reservation Indians (62.2 percent). This indicates that the proportion of children on Indian reservations is greater. In fact, the median age of urban Indians was 24.4 years of age as compared to the Albuquerque MSA of 32.1 years. It was even younger for the Cañoncito Navajo (22 years of age).

The younger profile for American Indian populations increases the likelihood of undercount. Past findings have indicated that transient teenage American Indian males, for instance, were most likely to be missed by the census.⁵

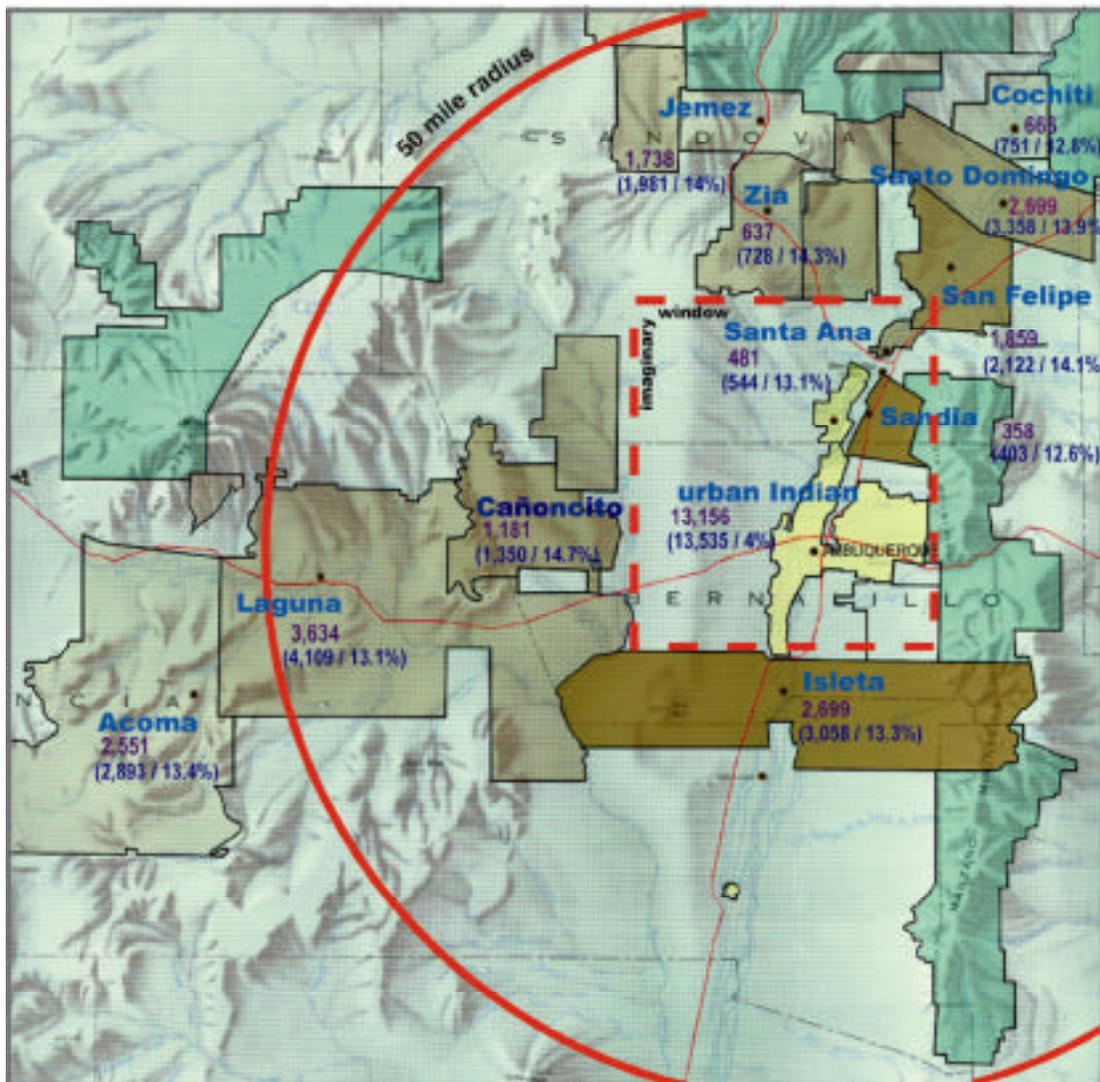
	Official Count	Percent of total	Adjusted Count	Percent of total
Urban	8,533	65.3%	8,795	65.4%
Reservation	11,657	62.2%	13,078	61.4%

⁵ *Ethnographic Undercount: Isleta Pueblo*, Theodore S. Jojola, Center for Survey Methods Research, Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C., Report #23, November, 1992.

Figure 1

Tribal Lands Surrounding Albuquerque 1990 American Indian Reservation Populations

official
(adjusted / %)



In the case of urban Indians, the adjusted count is 379 persons. As seen in Table 4, an enumeration of census tracts in Bernalillo County that had adjusted for five or more American Indian persons indicates percentage adjustments from a low of 1.7 percent (5 American Indian persons) to a high of 30.8 percent. The latter, which represents the most extreme census tract adjustment, however, still accounts for only 24 American Indian persons. This number, though, is less than the 28 American Indian persons who represent a 3.7 percent upward adjustment for census tract 602 that has a much larger count of American Indians residing in that area (767 persons).

Census Tracts	Official Count	Adjusted Count	Difference	Percent
124	91	96	5	5.5%
400	141	146	5	3.5%
1200	298	303	5	1.7%
1600	220	225	5	2.3%
2500	64	69	5	7.8%
2700	149	154	5	3.4%
3202	192	197	5	2.6%
4300	78	83	5	6.4%
707	227	233	6	2.6%
1100	278	284	6	2.2%
300	178	185	7	3.9%
703	220	227	7	3.2%
129	157	165	8	5.1%
904	291	299	8	2.7%
1800	92	100	8	8.7%
3001	240	248	8	3.3%
3714	178	186	8	4.5%
4706	432	440	8	1.9%
903	310	319	9	2.9%
3797	288	297	9	3.1%
1700	219	229	10	4.6%
709	303	314	11	3.6%
3400	267	279	12	4.5%
500	351	364	13	3.7%
901	657	674	17	2.6%
4709	454	473	19	4.2%
3707	78	102	24	30.8%
602	767	795	28	3.7%

In Figure 2, a geographic map detailing 111 census tracts for Bernalillo County shows the percentage distribution of adjusted counts. Those tracts that ranged from 4–6% represent neighborhoods that have cheap rental units or low cost housing (especially in the northwest quadrant as represented by the City of Rio Rancho). This is the type of housing market that urban Indians generally try to seek.

The two tracts at the western and southern boundaries (4800 and 3900) were adjusted upwards of 15 percent and 13 percent respectively. These

two tracts included reservation populations for the Cañoncito Navajos and the Pueblo of Isleta. As such, these upward adjustments are higher than the national average of 12.2 percent for Indian lands. The higher proportion is a better estimate for the population of Cañoncito Navajos.⁶

The biggest anomalies, though, are in census tract 3707 (30.8 percent) and census tract 3502 (-2.4 percent). The former tract contains a high proportion of rental apartments. Neighborhoods comprised of a high number of renters are more prone to undercount. Past findings indicate that tenure is as important in explaining undercount as is race.⁷ On the other hand, the latter tract is a gentrified neighborhood that has a high proportion of expensive ranchettes. In any event, the downward adjustment for this census tract only accounted for a decrease of one American Indian person.

In Figure 3, a geographic map is provided that shows the actual counts as distributed throughout Bernalillo county. As can be expected, those census tracts that had the highest numbers of urban Indians to begin with also had the largest adjusted counts. Census tracts 602, 901 and 4709 have among the highest official count of American Indians (767; 657; and 454 persons respectively). Together, these three tracts account for 64 of the 379 persons added to the count (17 percent).

The highest adjustments for Census tracts 4800 and 3900 (15 percent and 13 percent respectively) are attributed to undercounted reservation Indian populations. Together, the adjusted numbers for these two Census tracts add a total of 428 American Indian persons.

⁶ Navajos are considered one of the hardest tribes to enumerate because of their high fertility, their dispersed living arrangements, and the enormity of their land base (which spans four states).

⁷ *What The Census Bureau's Coverage Evaluation Programs Tell Us About Differential Undercount*, Howard Hogan and J. Gregory Robinson, 1993 Research Conference on Undercounted Ethnic Populations, May 5-7, 1993, Radisson Hotel, Richmond, Virginia.

Discussion of Planning Impacts

Social Service planning decisions by the City of Albuquerque, community based organizations and area reservations are affected when inaccurate census data for reservation and urban Indians is used. Part of the reason that all three social service planners struggled to serve their constituents throughout the 1990s is due to the 1990 Census missing 2,929 American Indians in the metro Albuquerque area. Social services such as schools, health care centers and job placement centers are chronically underserving the American Indian community because of the inability to accurately plan for the need.

Several factors contributed to the urban Indian undercount. One was the highly mobile population whose main reason to relocate to the city was for employment. Due to the mobility of American Indians, an undercount of American Indians in the metro Albuquerque area affects reservation based services and services offered in the city. All three providers interviewed indicated that the 1990 adjusted count was more indicative of the actual Indian population.

A second factor in the urban Indian undercount was attributed to the tendency for urban Indians to report their enrolled tribal home address as being their primary place of residence. However, it is most likely that moving between the city and reservation meant that urban Indians were completely left out of the census process in 1990. Both the city planner and the Director of the Albuquerque Indian Center (AIC) interviewed indicated that the urban Indian undercount of 4 percent was very low. Specifically, the AIC Director stated,

Legislation [such as welfare-to-work] is forcing people to make decisions about uprooting their family and moving to the city. I think that if they had their way, they would rather be home [on the reservation].

Additionally, those who need health care or job training rely on the city to provide assistance. City planners briefed the City Council as early as 1987 to explain the need for the City to provide targeted social services to urban Indians, such as job training and housing assistance, because Indians were migrating to the City. As a city planner described,

Our responsibility and that of the Task Force that we put together, was to show the City Council that they [the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Services and the All Indian Pueblo Council] don't provide the types of services that the City should provide to Indian people.

Although the 1990 Census indicated that 60 percent of all American Indian/Alaska Natives resided outside of Indian lands, many enrolled tribal members still seek services at their respective tribal villages. "Service area" policies by both the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Indian Health Service (IHS) require tribal members to apply for services at their designated provider on their home reservation, in spite of living closer to adjacent reservations. As indicated by a tribal planner,

Some of them [like those enrolled at Acoma Pueblo but who live at Sandia Pueblo] may have to drive 80 miles to Acoma to get services [like medical care].

This emphasizes the need to have the most accurate count on the reservations. In addition, better census numbers for urban Indians would show the need for BIA or IHS to reconsider their policies and allow Indians to go to the nearest social service provider rather than be required to return to their own reservation.

An undercount does not only affect reservation funding but also affects city planning for social services such as domestic violence abuse shelters and school planning. As the city planner indicated:

The undercount is very much a concern to us. Because what happens is that a lot of the overflow from the Pueblos ends up in Albuquerque. In terms of homelessness, and the kinds of services that they can't provide, and the Pueblos end up here. Issues like domestic violence, I think Laguna is the only one who has a domestic violence shelter. Other than that, [there are] those kind of social services issues [such as] substance abuse, treatment centers, and adults who need care [that] end up at UNM or Two Worlds.⁸ Then you have a lot of kids going to school and who have been here temporarily. The domestic violence issues—if they don't get served at the Pueblo they end up at our City funded domestic violence shelter. *So if there's an undercount of 2,500 people it does impact the City's affairs.* (emphasis added)

As for reservation Indians, tribal governments also behave like small towns. As one tribal planner indicated, “the tribe as a government has income.” Taken in the context of the Sandia Pueblo’s 12.6 percent adjustment, it is “enough to make a difference in a lot of program development and financial projections.”

In particular, because of the manner in which a tribe pursues Public Law 638 contract funding, any substantiated gains in population translate directly into substantial increases in operating revenue and added programming. Public Law 638—the Indian Self Determination Act passed by Congress in 1975—is the cornerstone budget mandate for all federally recognized tribal governments. Proposals must be factored using official U.S. Census counts. In the instance of a small tribe like Sandia Pueblo (358 official count/403 adjusted count), any undercount adjustment is substantial:

It would make a huge difference if there were five more youth or seniors—it might justify an in-house physical therapy program versus contracting somebody else [from outside the reservation] to do it.

By and large, it appeared to all three providers that U.S. federal agencies had the highest stake in getting accurate counts because of the reporting and justification requirements they imposed on programs seeking federal funds. All in all, undercounts affected all tribes equally if federal agencies relied on funding formulas to forecast budgets and allocate scarce resources on both size and need. As a tribal planner indicated,

⁸ UNM refers to the University of New Mexico Medical Center. The hospital provides indigent emergency care and has contracts with the tribes to provide specialized health care. Two Worlds is an Indian substance abuse program located in the City but managed by the All Indian Pueblo Council Inc.

The Federal Register might announce new money for something. How will they determine the amount of money each tribe gets? ...The answer is that they will determine the amount of money each tribe gets based on a combination of population, acreage, and other criteria more targeted to whatever the program is.

Of course the main implication is that any undercount will result in underfunding. Particularly where reservation programs are dependent on federal programs, even small increments in population are substantial both in the short term and, especially, over the long term. From the perspective of one of the tribal planners,

I've seen the tribe use it [census] for grant applications, in terms of raw data like poverty statistics, [and] unemployment statistics. I know they've used it for financial projections for their education scholarships, and for their healthcare and education trust funds. ...I think this population [Sandia] is so small that those changes [adjusted count] are really important.

On the other hand, city providers depended far less on federal funding. Instead, their sources of funding tended to be from state, city and private foundations. This did not preclude them, however, from using census data:

Yes, we really have to get some good data to use [for planning]. ... to justify in proposals why and how we came to the decisions that we came to, and [that] it wasn't just instinct or a [guess]. ...Census data is the first thing we look at.

In lieu of reliable census data, city providers are forced to use other sources for their data needs. In the case of AIC, for example,

The City has some good data, and the reason that they have it for this area is because it's been identified as a MRA—the Metropolitan Reinvestment Area. And it was chosen because of its high poverty, high crime rate, low percentage of home ownership, drug dealing and substance abuse problems. ...So the City came out and really did a lot more data gathering regarding some of the special and unique problems.

Even in 1980, when it was determined that the enumeration of urban Indians in the U.S. Census was severely underestimated, the City resorted to alternative methods to determine the population count:

But at the same time, we also wanted to show the City Council that even though the Census data only showed 10,000 American Indians in the city, there were actually a lot more than 10,000 that we had to be "responsible" for beyond those that are just city residents. This was the case even though we didn't have to prove that there was a threshold. ...We looked at APS' [Albuquerque Public School] numbers on the amount of students in their system, and at that time there were about 5,000 students in the city. Then we multiplied that by the average number of family members who identified as American Indian in the Census, and it turned out to be around 2.8 or 2.9 per family member. Then we multiplied that by the number of school-aged children reported.

In the final analysis, though, the impact of the adjustment to the urban Indian population depends less on the magnitude of the actual increase, but the characteristics attributed to that population. Both urban and reservation households tend to be younger in family composition and poorer than the average American household. Particularly when services are

oriented toward children, seniors and socio-economically disadvantaged groups, a small increase will significantly change how funds are allocated to the respective service providers:

I think that if we're just looking at it in general, 379, then it doesn't seem that significant. But if we broke it down, and found that it was mainly seniors, than the impact would be significant. But if they're children, yes. If they're students, I'd take a second look at it. On the other hand, we're also looking at it by program. Like if these 379 were all going to the Albuquerque Indian Center or First Nations for services, then that would definitely have a big impact on those two small programs.⁹

Methodology

The first part of this study was to examine the distribution of population undercounts by U.S. Census tract and reservation boundaries. The second was to interview personnel from three social service providers—City, non-profit, and a Reservation-based agency.

The data was obtained from the 1990 Census of Population and Housing, Public Law 94-171 data set. Both the official (unadjusted) and the adjusted counts were used for American Indians and Alaska Natives as tabulated by age, race and Hispanic origin.¹⁰

In-person interviews were conducted with three social services providers representing the three areas where urban and reservation Indians seek services: the City, an urban Indian community-based organization and the reservation. Ms. Jeri Lorretto, Community Planner at the City of Albuquerque's Department of Youth and Family Services and Mrs. Carol Weakee, Director of the Albuquerque Indian Center were interviewed.¹¹ To hear a reservation planner's perspective, Mr. Matt Foster, Director of Tribal Lands and Ms. Monica Abeita, Economic Development Planner, both of the Pueblo of Sandia tribe were interviewed.¹²

The interviews lasted approximately one-half hour and were audio-taped and transcribed. Only relevant excerpts have been submitted for this study. The set of questions used in the interviews is provided in the appendix.

⁹ The First Nations Community Health Program is a non-profit health service provider for American Indians in the city of Albuquerque.

¹⁰ The data set was downloaded from the U.S. Census Factfinder web site: www.census.gov. Additional statistical support was obtained from Dr. Adeleamar N. Alcantara, Senior Demographer, Bureau of Business and Economic Research, University of New Mexico. Jim Davis, Director, Division of Government Research, University of New Mexico, provided technical assistance on the GIS mapping component.

¹¹ The Albuquerque Indian Center was incorporated as a New Mexico non-profit corporation in 1990. It provides various social service programs for urban Indians under contracts from the New Mexico Office of Indian Affairs and the City of Albuquerque. The Center is comprised of offices and houses facilities for cultural events and program activities.

¹² The Pueblo of Sandia is one of 19 Pueblos located in New Mexico. Sandia Pueblo is a federally recognized tribe and its reservation encompasses 22,877 acres on the east side of the Rio Grande river. The present historic village has been occupied since 1300AD.

Appendix

Questions on Adjustments

1st part —

How do the social service programs that are funded by your program(s) use population data to get funding?

Is “formula” funding obtained for American Indians greater because of a higher poverty rate than other minority groups?

2nd part —

In the study we did for the City, if we had used 1990 adjusted figures there would have been a marginal change for Urban Indians, but a significant change for reservation populations.

By our calculations, these are:

	Official Count	Adjusted Count	Difference	Percent
Urban	13,156	13,535	379	4.0%
Reservation	18,747	21,297	2,550	13.6%

Do you think these adjustments accurately reflect the undercount for each group?

What impact would the adjusted figures have had on social services planning, if any?

Is there a funding “threshold” that would have been reached by the adjusted counts, or would funding have remained at the same level in any case?